

REMARKS

1. In the above-captioned Office Action, the Examiner objected to the abstract of the disclosure and claims 1-10. Claims 1-7, 9, 11-15, 17, 18, 20-24, 26, and 27 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. §102(b) in view of Highlen et al. (U.S. Patent No. 5,570,910). Claims 8, 10, 16, 19, 25, and 28 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) given Highlen in view of Karl et al. (U.S. Patent No. 5,553,895). These rejections and objections are traversed and reconsideration is hereby respectfully requested.

2. The Examiner objected to the Abstract of the Disclosure because "that" should be inserted before "may" on line 2 and "described should be deleted on line 4. Although the Abstract as originally presented meets the requirements of M.P.E.P. §608.01(b), and no particular issue was pointed out as failing to meet a specific requirement of the M.P.E.P., the Abstract is nevertheless amended above.

3. The Examiner objected to claims 1-10 because "the actuator cavity" in claim 1, line 9 lacks antecedent basis. Claim 1 as amended above.

4. Claims 1-7, 9, 11-15, 17, 18, 20-24, 26, and 27 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. §102(b) in view of Highlen. Prior to discussing the merits of the Examiner's position, the applicant believes it would be helpful to first briefly describe and characterize the Highlen reference.

THE HIGHLEN REFERENCE

As stated in Highlen:

Still referring to FIG. 1, the other component of the male member 20 is a separately formed release sleeve 33 consisting of a metal portion 34 and a thermoplastic and/or elastomeric (TPE) portion 35 [Column 2, lines 64-67].

Highlen therefore describes that the release sleeve is part of the male member when the male and female members are separated, such as shown in FIG. 4 and the other figures. The Examiner also states the release collar is affixed to the male member on Page 3, line 7 of the Office Action. Thus, Highlen's collar, by being affixed to the male member as shown in the drawings, is not engaged with the female member nor is it retainable on the female member because the limitations set forth in the drawings and text. Highlen does *not* describe that *the release collar is retainable on the female*

member, as set forth in independent claim 21, nor that the actuator is *disposed on the female member when the male member and the female member are not engaged*, as set forth in dependent claims 9 and 18.

Hence, the applicant respectfully submits that independent claim 1 and dependent claims 9 and 18 may be passed to allowance.

As shown in FIG. 4 and FIG. 9 of Highlen, when the male member is separated from female member, the actuator does not fit nor move between the rib of the male member and the female member. Further, because Highlen's actuator stays on the male member, the rib of the Highlen's male member cannot be withdrawn along the actuator when the male member is removed. Thus, Highlen fails to teach or suggest that an *actuator is disposable between a radially outermost surface of a rib of the male member and the female member when the male member is withdrawn from the female member*, as set forth in independent claim 1 as amended above, that *the actuator is disposable between a rib of the male member and the female member such that the rib of the male member is withdrawn along the actuator when the male member is withdrawn from the female member*, as set forth in independent claim 11 as amended above, and that *the actuator fits between a rib of the male member and the inner release surface of the female member so that the male member may be withdrawn from the female member*, as set forth in dependent claim 27 as amended above.

Hence, the applicant respectfully submits that independent claims 1 and 11 and dependent claim 27 may be passed to allowance.

Furthermore, Highlen does not teach or suggest that his actuator extends between the outermost surface of the rib and the locking ring, Highlen fails to teach or suggest that the actuator is capable of dislodging the locking ring into a chamber within the female member when inserted between the locking ring and a radially outermost surface of the rib, as set forth in dependent claims 2 and 26.

Furthermore, claims 2-6, 9, 12-15, 17, 18, 20, 22-24, 26, and 27 are dependent upon an independent claim that is shown to be allowable. For all these reasons, the dependent claims are themselves allowable.

5. Claims 8, 10, 16, 19, 25, and 28 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) given Highlen in view of Karl. Karl also teaches that the release sleeve is disposed on the male member when the male member and the female member are not engaged, as

shown in Karl's FIG. 5. Nor does Karl teach that his actuator fits between a rib of the male member and the female member.

Thus, the claims of the present invention are not taught or suggested by Highlen and/or Karl. Combining these references falls to teach or yield the invention as claimed. The combination of these references falls to teach or suggest all the elements of the claims. Therefore, the present invention is not obvious in light of any combination of Highlen and/or Karl.

Furthermore, claims 8, 10, 16, 19, 25, and 28 are dependent upon an independent claim that is shown to be allowable. For all these reasons, the dependent claims are themselves allowable.

6. No new subject matter is introduced by the amendments to the above claims or the Abstract.

7. The Examiner is invited to contact the undersigned by telephone or facsimile if the Examiner believes that such a communication may advance the prosecution of the present application. Notice of allowance of claims 1-28 is hereby respectfully requested.

Respectfully submitted,

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